

List of all Pending Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for permitting access to an electronic system by way of a touchpad, comprising:

~~receiving at least a first and second signal, wherein each signal indicates a state change of a corresponding switch, wherein each state change is in response to a selector being urged in a particular direction;~~

dividing said touchpad into a plurality of regions and assigning a character to each of said regions;

receiving a sequence of characters that represents the movements of a user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad;

~~said electronic system comparing each said received sequence of characters signal with a predetermined sequence of characters group of predetermined signals and a direction associated with each signal of said group of predetermined signals; and~~

permitting access to an operating mode of said electronic system when said comparing action determines that the received sequence of characters ~~each signal~~ accords with said predetermined sequence of characters ~~group of predetermined signals and said direction associated with each signal of said group of predetermined signals~~.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said electronic system is a computing device.

3-4. (Claims 3-4 are canceled)

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 2 [4], wherein said touchpad is located ~~first and second signals are generated using directional arrow keys which are proximate to a key board of said~~ computing device ~~laptop computer~~.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein said permitting action further comprises allowing access to a protected file.

7-11. (Please cancel claim 7-11.)

12. (Currently amended) An electronic system which enters an operational mode based on inputs from a touchpad ~~direction-sensitive and touch-activated security device~~, comprising:

a processor for dividing said touchpad into a plurality of regions and assigning a character to each of said regions;

a signal conditioner for receiving a sequence of characters that represents the movements of a user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad ~~a plurality of signals wherein each signal indicates a state change of one of a plurality of corresponding switches, said state change being in response to a selector being urged in a first or a second direction;~~

a processor for comparing said received sequence of characters with a predetermined sequence of characters; and

~~the plurality of signals output from said signal conditioner with a predetermined group of signals, wherein each signal of said predetermined group of signals is associated with an accompanying direction; and~~

an access control circuit which permits the use of said operational mode based on the results of said comparing action.

13. (Currently amended) The electronic system of claim 12 wherein said touchpad ~~direction-sensitive and touch-activated security device~~ is located external to said electronic system.

14. (Currently amended) The electronic system of claim 12 wherein said electronic system is a laptop computer and said ~~direction-sensitive and touch-activated security device~~ touchpad is located on a cover of said laptop computer.

15. (Currently amended) The electronic system of claim 12 wherein said electronic system is a laptop computer and said touchpad ~~direction-sensitive and touch-activated security device~~ is located proximate to a keyboard of said laptop computer.

16-17. (Please cancel claim 16-17.)

18. (Currently amended) In a portable computer, a method of permitting said portable computer to be removed from a docking station, comprising:

dividing said touchpad into a plurality of regions and assigning a character to each of said regions;

receiving a sequence of characters that represents the movements of a user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad;

~~receiving a first signal which conveys that a selector has been urged toward a first direction;~~

~~receiving a second signal which conveys that said selector has been urged along a second direction, said second direction being different from said first direction;~~

~~comparing said first and second signals~~ received sequence of characters with a predetermined sequence of characters signals, ~~each signal of said predetermined sequence of signal being associated with a particular direction; and~~

permitting undocking of said portable computer when said comparing action determines that received sequence of characters accords with ~~said first and second signals accord with~~ said predetermined sequence of characters signals.

19-20. (Please cancel claim 19-20)

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein said touchpad ~~selector~~ is located on the top cover of said portable computer.

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein said touchpad ~~selector~~ is located proximate to a keyboard of said portable computer.

23-29. (Please cancel claims 23-29.)

30. (Currently amended) A program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by said machine to perform method steps for directing a portable computer to enter an operational mode, said method comprising:

dividing said touchpad into a plurality of regions and assigning a character to each of said regions;

receiving a sequence of characters that represents signals from a touchpad,
~~said signals representing~~ the movements of a user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad,

comparing said received sequence of characters ~~signals~~ with a group of predetermined sequence of characters ~~signals~~ associated with movements of said user's finger tracing said pattern on said touchpad; and

permitting access to an operating mode of said computing device when said comparing action determines that said received sequence of characters ~~signals~~ representing movements of said user's finger tracing a pattern on said touchpad accords with said ~~group of~~ predetermined sequence of characters ~~signals~~ associated with movements of said user's finger tracing said pattern on said touchpad.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30 wherein said permitting action further comprises allowing a user to access a protected file.

32. (Original) The method of claim 30 wherein said computing device is a laptop computer.

33. (Original) The method of claim 32, wherein said touchpad is located proximate to a keyboard of said laptop computer.